

Biography of Osho

1931 - 1953 Early Years

December 11, 1931: Osho is born in Kuchwada, a small village in the state of Madhya Pradesh, central India.

He is the eldest of eleven children of a Jaina cloth merchant. Stories of His early years describe Him as independent and rebellious as a child, questioning all social, religious and philosophical beliefs. As a youth He experiments with meditation techniques.

March 21, 1953: Osho becomes enlightened at the age of twenty-one, while majoring in philosophy at D.N. Jain college in Jabalpur.

In the East, enlightenment is described as a state of ultimate and total consciousness or awareness, as attained by Gautama Buddha, Socrates, and others. Western concepts of "enlightened" connoting "modern" and "the Enlightenment," indicating 18th century European intellectual ferment are only linguistically similar.

1953 - 1956 Education

1956: Osho receives His M.A. from the University of Sagar with First Class Honors in Philosophy.

He is the All-India Debating Champion and Gold Medal winner in His graduating class.

1957-1968 University Professor and Public Speaker

1957: Osho is appointed as a professor at the Sanskrit College in Raipur.

1958: He is appointed Professor of Philosophy at the University of Jabalpur, where He taught until 1966.

A powerful and passionate debater, He also travels widely in India, speaking to large audiences and challenging orthodox religious leaders in public debates.

1966: After nine years of teaching, He leaves the university to devote Himself entirely to the raising of human consciousness. on a regular basis, He begins to address gatherings 20,000 to 50,000 in the open-air maidans of India's major cities. Four times a year He conducts intense ten-day meditation camps.

In 1970, the 14th of April, He introduces His revolutionary meditation technique, dynamic Meditation, which begins with a period of uninhibited movement and catharsis, followed by a period of silence and stillness. Since then this meditation technique has been used by psychotherapists, medical doctors, teachers and other professionals around the world .

1969 - 1974 Bombay Years

Late 1960's: His Hindi talks become available in English translations.

1970: In July, 1970, He moves to Bombay, where He lives until 1974.

1970: Osho - at this time called Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh - begins to initiate seekers into Neo-Sannyas or discipleship, a path of commitment to self-exploration and meditation which does not involve renouncing the world or anything else. Osho's understanding of 'renunciation' is a radical departure from the traditional Eastern viewpoint. For Him it is not the material world that needs to be renounced but our past and the conditionings and belief systems that each generation imposes on the next. He continues to conduct meditation camps at Mount Abu in Rajasthan but stops accepting invitations to speak throughout the country. He devotes his energies entirely to the rapidly expanding group of sannyasins around Him.

At this time, the first Westerners begin to arrive and to be initiated into Neo-Sannyas. Among them are leading psychotherapists from the human potential movement in Europe and America, seeking the next step in their own inner growth. With Osho they experience new, original meditation techniques for contemporary man, synthesizing the wisdom of the East with the science of the West.

1974 - 1981 Poona Ashram

During these seven years He gives a 90 minutes discourse nearly every morning, alternating every month between Hindi and English. His discourses offer insights into all the major spiritual paths, including Yoga, Zen, Taoism, Tantra and Sufism. He also speaks on Gautam Buddha, Jesus, Lao Tzu, and other mystics. These discourses have been collected into over 300 volumes and translated into 20 languages.

In the evenings, during these years, He answers questions on personal matters such as love, jealousy, meditation. These 'darshans' are compiled in 64 darshan diaries of which 40 are published.

The commune that arose around Osho at this time offers a wide variety of therapy groups which combine Eastern meditation techniques with Western psychotherapy. Therapists from all over the world are attracted and by 1980 the international community gained a reputation as 'the world's finest growth and therapy center.' One hundred thousand people pass through its gates each year.

1981: He develops a degenerative back condition. In March 1981, after giving daily discourses for nearly 15 years, Osho begins a three-year period of self-imposed public silence. In view of the possible need for emergency surgery, and on the recommendation of His personal doctors, He travels to the U.S.

This same year, His American disciples purchase a 64,000-acre ranch in Oregon and invite Him to visit. He eventually agrees to stay in the U.S. and allows an application for permanent residence to be filed on His behalf.

1981 - 1985 Rajneeshpuram

A model agricultural commune rises from the ruins of the central Oregonian high desert. Thousands of overgrazed and economically unviable acres are reclaimed. The city of Rajneeshpuram is incorporated and eventually provides services to 5,000 residents. Annual summer festivals are held which draw 15,000 visitors from all over the world. Very quickly, Rajneeshpuram becomes the largest and most controversial spiritual community ever pioneered in America.

Opposition to the commune and new city keeps pace with its success. Responding to the anti-cult fervor which pervades all levels of American society during the Reagan years, local, state and federal politicians make inflammatory speeches against the Rajneeshes. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), the Treasury Department, and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Agency (ATF) are only a few of the agencies spending millions of dollars in taxpayers' money while harassing the commune with unwarranted and fruitless investigations. Similar costly campaigns are conducted in Oregon.

October 1984: Osho ends three and one half years of self-imposed silence, and begins speaking to small groups of people who gather at His residence.

July 1985: He resumes His public discourses each morning to thousands of seekers gathered in a two-acre meditation hall.

Sept. - Oct. 1985: The Oregon Commune is Destroyed

September 14: Osho's personal secretary and several members of the commune's management suddenly leave, and a whole pattern of illegal acts they have committed - including poisoning, arson, wiretapping, and attempted murder - are exposed. Osho invites law enforcement officials to investigate Sheela's crimes. The authorities, however, see the investigation as a golden opportunity to destroy the commune entirely.

October 23: A U.S. federal grand jury in Portland secretly indicts Osho and 7 others on relatively minor charges of immigration fraud.

October 28: Without warrants, federal and local officials arrest at gun point Osho and others in Charlotte, North Carolina. While the others are released, He is held without bail for twelve days. A five-hour return plane trip to Oregon takes four days. En route, Osho is held incommunicado and forced to register under the pseudonym, David Washington, in the Oklahoma County jail. Subsequent events indicate that it is probable that He was poisoned with the heavy metal thallium while in that jail and the El Reno Federal Penitentiary.

November: Emotions and publicity swell around Osho's immigration case. Fearing for His life and the well-being of sannyasins in volatile Oregon, attorneys agree to an Alford Plea on two out of 35 of the original charges against Him. According to the rules of the plea, the defendant maintains innocence while saying that the prosecution could have convicted him. Osho and His attorneys maintain His innocence in the court. He is fined \$400,000 and is deported from America.

Among others, U.S. Attorney in Portland, Charles Turner, publicly concedes that the government was intent on destroying Rajneeshpuram.

1985 - 1986 World Tour

December 1985: The Indian government attempts to isolate Him by canceling the visas issued to his personal household staff.

January-February: He travels to Kathmandu, Nepal and speaks twice daily for the next two months. In February, the Nepalese government refuses visas for His visitors and closest attendants. He leaves Nepal and embarks on a world tour.

February-March: At His first stop, Greece, he is granted a 30-day tourist visa. But after only 18 days, on March 5, Greek police forcibly break into the house where He is staying, arrest Him at gun point, and deport him. Greek media reports indicate government and church pressure provoked the police intervention.

During the following two weeks He visits or asks permission to visit 17 countries in Europe and the Americas. All of these countries either refuse to grant Him a visitor's visa or revoke His visa upon His arrival, and force Him to leave. Some refuse even landing permission for His plane.

March-June: On March 19 He travels to Uruguay. On May 14th the government has scheduled a press conference to announce that He will be granted permanent residence in Uruguay. Uruguay's President Sanguinetti later admits that he received a telephone call from Washington, D.C. the night before the press conference. He is told that if Osho is allowed to stay in Uruguay, the six billion dollar debt Uruguay owes to the U.S. will be due immediately and no further loans will be granted. Osho is ordered to leave Uruguay on June 18th.

June-July: During the next month He is deported from both Jamaica and Portugal. In all, 21 countries had denied Him entry or deported Him after arrival. On July 29, 1986, He returns to Bombay, India.

1987 - 1989 Osho Commune International

January 1987: He returns to the ashram in Poona, India, which is renamed Rajneeshdham. The Indian government resumes its policy of denying visas to known friends of Osho.

July 1988: Osho begins, for the first time in 14 years, to personally lead the meditation at the end of each evening's discourse. He also introduces a revolutionary new meditation technique called The Mystic Rose.

January-February 1989: He stops using the name "Bhagwan," retaining only the name Rajneesh. However, His disciples ask to call Him 'Osho' and He accepts this form of address. Osho explains that His name is derived from William James' word 'oceanic' which means dissolving into the ocean. Oceanic describes the experience, He says, but what about the experiencer? For that we use the word 'Osho.' Later, He came to find out that 'Osho' has also been used historically in the Far East, meaning "The Blessed One, on Whom the Sky Showers Flowers."

March-June 1989: Osho is resting to recover from the effects of the poisoning, which by now are strongly influencing His health.

July 1989: His health is getting better and He makes two appearances for silent darshans during the Festival, now renamed Osho Full Moon Celebration.

August 1989: Osho begins to make daily appearances in Gautama the Buddha Auditorium for evening darshan. He sits in silence while music is played, explaining: "That which cannot be said has to be experienced. This is a great experience of getting into an inner, meditative space." He also inaugurates a special group of white-robed sannyasins called the "Osho White Robe Brotherhood." All sannyasins and non-sannyasins attending the evening darshans are asked to wear white robes. Osho has said that "There is a mystical gathering of energy in these robes; day by day, they gather more potential."

On the second weekend of every month, three-day meditation camps are held, using the unique meditation techniques devised by Osho. All participants are asked to wear maroon robes. In a further development, Osho suggests that sannyasins working in the ashram should also wear maroon, so in the day the commune is filled with maroon-robed people and in the evening with white-robed people.

September 1989: Osho drops the name "Rajneesh," signifying His complete discontinuity from the past. He is known simply as "Osho," and the ashram is renamed "Osho Commune International."

1990 Osho leaves His body

January 1990: During the second week in January, Osho's body becomes noticeably weaker. On January 18, He is so physically weak that He is unable to come to Gautama the Buddha Auditorium. On January 19, His pulse becomes irregular. When His doctor inquires whether they should prepare for cardiac resuscitation, Osho says, "No, just let me go. Existence decides its timing." He leaves His body at 5 p.m. At 7 p.m. His body is brought to Gautama the Buddha Auditorium for a celebration, and is then carried to the burning ghats for cremation. Two days later, His ashes are brought to Osho Commune International and placed in His samadhi in Chuang Tzu Auditorium. In the days that follow, thousands of sannyasins and lovers fly in from around the world to celebrate and absorb the atmosphere of love and meditation that is the fragrance of Osho.

Just before His departure from the body, Osho says: "Never speak of me in the past tense. My presence here will be many times greater without the burden of my tortured body. Remind my people that they will feel much more--they will know immediately." Osho also talks about how He wants the expansion of the work to

continue. He says that now that he is leaving His body, many more people would come, many more people's interest would show, and His work would expand incredibly beyond our ideas. Then He says: "I leave you my dream."

In 1980, in answer to the question, "What happens when you leave your body?" Osho replies, "I will be dissolved in my people. Just as you can taste the sea from any place and it is salty, you will be able to taste any of my sannyasins and you will find the same taste: the taste of the Blessed One.... I am preparing my people to live joyously, ecstatically. So when I am not in my body, it won't make any difference to them. They will still live the same way - and maybe my death will bring them more intensity."

In 1989 He responded to a similar question from Italian TV, saying, "I believe and trust absolutely in existence. If there is any truth in what I am saying, it will survive. The people who remain interested in my work will be simply carrying the torch, but not imposing anything on anyone, either by sword or bread. I will remain a source of inspiration to my people and that is what most sannyasins will feel. I want them to grow on their own. Qualities like love, around which no church can be created, like awareness, qualities which are nobody's monopoly, like celebration, rejoicing, and maintaining childlike fresh eyes. I want people to know themselves not to be according to someone else, and the way is in."